

human services element

INTRODUCTION

Our community includes a growing population of people with disabilities, senior citizens, and those that are culturally, ethnically and racially diverse. Affordable housing, food, child care, and support for teens, older adults, and people with disabilities are among the services the community identified as being important. The Human Services Element establishes policies that enable and support the creation and maintenance of needed services, programs and facilities in Issaquah. The provision of human services is a joint effort between the public and private sector that requires a coordinated approach to meet the community's needs.

The City plays a supportive role in providing for the community's human service needs by working with local and regional agencies to establish programs and facilities aimed at enhancing personal and community living.

HUMAN SERVICES VISION

Issaquah strives to be a sustainable and healthy community where every person is important, and where meeting basic human needs is a shared responsibility between individuals and the community.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

growth management act requirements

Although inclusion of a Human Services Element in local Comprehensive Plans is not mandatory under the Growth Management Act, the City recognizes the importance of planning for human services and adopted its first Human Services Element in 1997.

GOALS AND POLICIES

basic human needs

Goal A. Create a community in which all members have the ability to meet their basic physical, mental, economic, and social needs, and the opportunity to enhance their quality of life.

discussion

There are many human service organizations that provide services to Issaquah residents and those within the Issaquah community. Local and regional agencies and programs provide food, clothing, shelter, counseling and other services to those in need. For many years the City has provided in-kind support for local human service organizations by providing land, buildings, and maintenance of related facilities. The City also works with programs such as A Regional

Coalition for Housing (ARCH) to increase access to affordable housing opportunities for all segments of the population.¹

In 2007, the City established the Human Services Commission to advise the Mayor and City Council on funding, policies and regional collaboration for human services. In addition to the City, local service clubs donate significant funds as part of their community service. The City plays a supportive role in providing funding regarding basic human needs, including food, clothing, shelter, primary health/dental care, and protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

HS Policy A1 Support and facilitate the community's basic human needs for food, clothing, shelter, primary health/mental health/dental care, and protection from abuse and neglect.

Healthy and Sustainable Food Access and Security

Goal B. Ensure healthy and sustainable food access and security for the Issaquah community.

discussion

Food is not normally assigned the same prominence as transit, housing, or open space, yet it is obviously integral and important to citizens' everyday lives. To implement PSRC's Vision 2040 and the King County Countywide Planning Policies, Issaquah is including food policies in the Comprehensive Plan. Planning for healthy and sustainable food access and food systems is in line with Growth Management goals to address urban sprawl, economic development, open space, and protection of our ecological systems.

Food Access. Although Issaquah has several local food production/urban agriculture programs currently operating, we must remain vigilant that a Food Desert does not occur with the City as our population grows.

- a. Pickering Demonstration Garden. The Pickering Garden is City owned and offers classes, tours, and volunteer opportunities for people to learn about urban agriculture and growing their own healthy foods. Produce grown at the Pickering Garden is pesticide free and is provided at no cost to the Issaquah Food Bank.
- b. Issaquah Community Garden at Confluence Park. The Community Garden was created in response to our residents request for more community garden space. It provides neighbors with access to fresh produce and plants.
- c. The Issaquah Farmers Market. The Farmers Market is held weekly from mid-April through mid-October and includes produce, meat and food from local farmers.
- d. P-Patches: Issaquah has several community-run p-patches. Like community gardens, p-patches provide neighbors with access to fresh produce and plants.
- e. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). Several farms offer CSA memberships and drop off fresh boxes of local produce to their members. Issaquah has drop off points for several of the farms in our region.
- f. Residential zoning. The Issaquah Municipal Code allows chickens, other livestock, bees and hobby farms in certain locations within the City limits to reduce barriers to urban agriculture.

¹ See the Housing Element for more information regarding affordable housing.

Food Security. Food Security is a major global issue, since food production and systems are intricately tied nationally and internationally. Regionally, food security is concerned with the full spectrum of food chain events including agriculture, the availability and distribution of grocery stores and other outlets that sell fresh foods, and the involvement of the community and local governments in seeking solutions to food insecurity which often affects disadvantaged and lower income families. Food Security has two basic themes:

- a. **Prepare for climate and disaster-related shortages.** At least half of Issaquah's City-limits are also the boundary of the Urban Growth Area. This means that rural King County shares our boundary, and our community is fortunate to have rural farmlands so close to our City. The more food that can be grown in Issaquah and nearby, the more secure Issaquah will be in times of food shortage. In addition, the shipping and transportation of food also contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. Planning for food security will be integral in developing Issaquah's Climate and Energy Strategy as climate change is associated with changing weather patterns which affect agricultural output.
- b. **Improve access to food for the community now and in the future.** There are several regionally-based programs that address food security in a variety of ways for underserved populations, especially for lower income families. There are several regional and local organizations that seek to make connections on behalf of underserved populations; teach people how to grow food and raise food animals; grow food to donate to the food bank and promote bee-keeping, which is critical to crop fruition. Growing food locally also creates opportunities for small communities to form such as with p-patch programs, church run programs and the Issaquah Food Bank that are geared toward providing local food for a specific population.

HS Policy B1 Support the local food economy within Issaquah and the region through supportive regulations that allow agricultural, farmland, and aquatic uses that enhance the food system and its capacity to produce fresh and minimally processed foods.

HS Policy B2 Improve Issaquah's food security by increasing the amount of food grown within the City and coordinating with local farms in outlying areas.

HS Policy B3 Seek a variety of ways to encourage healthy food vendors and businesses, and urban garden programs to locate in Issaquah.

HS Policy B4 Support systems and programs, in collaboration with urban agriculture partners that result in increased access to healthy foods for the most at risk populations in the City with an emphasis on school-age children.

HS Policy B5 Provide healthy food and beverages in City programs and facilities to promote healthy eating habits.

HS Policy B6 Support organizations that help provide food assistance to low income residents so that families, seniors, schools, and community-based organizations are able to access, purchase, and increase intake of fresh fruits, vegetables, and other nutritious foods. Ensure that Food Deserts do not occur in Issaquah.

- HS Policy B7** Support local and regional climate change reduction through food security and urban agriculture programs to achieve Issaquah's goal to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2020, based on 2007 levels.

sustaining services

Goal C. Support a sustainable and healthy community in which every individual has access to community resources and services.

discussion

Sustaining services include, but are not limited to: a) Employment services, including employment training, special needs population training and placement, or support programs for the unemployed segment of the special needs population; b) Preventive education and social support including counseling, outreach, peer, and crisis support; c) Supportive services for people with chronic illnesses or impairments; d) Assistance in accessing services such as transportation, interpretive services, and information and referral programs; and e) Promotion of healthy lifestyles. We are responsible for maintaining the health of our community which requires education and awareness of the importance of a healthy community. A city's vitality depends on the degree to which its residents and families are able to thrive. An effective human services delivery system is a crucial component of any healthy, sustainable community.

- HS Policy C1** Address the needs of people with disabilities, including provision of housing, services, and transportation to allow these individuals to live as independently as possible.

- HS Policy C2** Support job training programs so that every individual has the opportunity to be a productive part of the work force and can earn the income necessary to support their own independence. Recognize that English language training to our non-native English speaking population is a vital piece of successful job training.

- HS Policy C3** Encourage a stable job base by working with the private sector, county and state agencies to increase the number of family wage jobs in Issaquah. A stable job base of family wage jobs helps to address the needs of a population with a wider range and gap in household incomes.

- HS Policy C4** Support affordable and quality care facilities for working families responsible for seniors or other individuals with disabilities through land use plans, regulations and other assistance.

- HS Policy C5** Promote increased awareness of local need for human services through community education and outreach.

- HS Policy C6** Promote healthy lifestyles through positive opportunities for physical activity, healthy eating and healthy behaviors. Support recreational and fitness activities, promotion of healthy eating, safe and convenient walking, bicycling and

recreational facilities, pedestrian oriented urban design standards, substance abuse education and other related activities.

quality of life enhancements

Goal D. Maintain and enhance the Quality of Life for all Issaquah residents by supporting programs that enhance personal and community living for special populations, older adults, people with disabilities and non-english speaking populations.

discussion

Quality of Life is difficult to define, however quality education, excellent parks and recreation opportunities, efficient government services, accessible multi-modal transportation and cultural amenities contribute to Issaquah's Quality of Life. Special populations, older adults, people with disabilities and non-english speaking populations also need to have access to Quality of Life features and amenities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) promises full access to state and local government services and activities for individuals with disabilities. Issaquah is working toward full compliance with ADA through a phased implementation plan.

HS Policy D1 Support quality education and lifelong learning, with an emphasis on high school graduation and continuing education as appropriate.

HS Policy D2 For special populations, older adults, people with disabilities and non-english speaking populations, Offer services in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of special populations, older adults, people with disabilities, and non-english speaking populations.

public transportation

Goal E. Encourage and expand local and regional public transportation systems to serve individuals with disabilities, older adults, youth and individuals with limited incomes.

Discussion: Access to public transportation is a key issue for individuals with disabilities, older adults, youth and individuals and families with limited incomes who rely upon public transportation for a variety of basic needs, employment and access to recreational, cultural and other resources in the community. The Transportation Element addresses these issues, however it is important to address specific transportation issues here that cross over as human services issues as well.

HS Policy E1 Encourage access to public transportation services to employment, health care, human services, recreation and cultural destinations for low income and other transit dependent individuals.

HS Policy E2 Support transportation programs that provide financial assistance for elderly, low income and other populations.

HS Policy E3 Increase mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by improving safety and accessibility.

affordable housing

Goal F. Support fair and equitable affordable housing and supportive services that help attain the affordable housing targets established in the Housing Element and Central Issaquah Plan.

discussion

The Housing Element addresses these issues, however it is important to address specific housing issues related to human services. Creating a pool of housing affordable to workforce families and individuals, and also targeting moderate and low income community members is a laudable goal for 2031 and beyond. Students in our community will be able to afford a place of their own once they leave their parents' house. "Empty nesters" can downsize from family homes with high maintenance yards to dwelling units close to amenities. Creating housing that is affordable for local workers is one solution for Issaquah's regional transportation problem, as local commute time and peak hour congestion is decreased when the employee lives in the community. (Central Plan)

Specific policies on this topic are included within the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

shelters

Goal G. Support the location of permanent and emergency shelters for men, for women and children, and for teens throughout the region to address local and regional homelessness.

discussion

Homelessness is an experience that individuals and families may face for a variety of reasons. The reality of homelessness is extremely challenging for those experiencing it, and it can also present challenges for the community at large. Therefore, communities must work together--across sectors and geographic boundaries-- to find solutions that are effective for those experiencing homelessness and that allow our communities to continue to thrive. Emergency shelter has been recognized as one point of entry on the path to housing. However, while shelter needs are more pronounced during winter months, 'low barrier' shelter is needed year round. A low barrier shelter is where a minimum number of expectations are placed on people who wish to live there. The aim is to have as few barriers as possible to allow more people access to services. The Housing Element addresses the issue of shelters, however it is important to address specific housing issues here that cross over as human services issues as well.

HS Policy G1 Establish a regional "complete shelter strategy" which includes outreach and daytime services.

financial goals – funding

Goal H. Ensure that there is sufficient and sustainable funding to address human services needs.

discussion

Within this element, policies exist to support partnerships with local government and businesses in order to qualify for grants, contributing City Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to demonstrate benefits to Issaquah citizens and recognize regional needs through a

coordinated funding approach; however, there is no dedicated funding source. As Issaquah's community grows, the need for human services will also grow.

HS Policy H1 Work to preserve and increase the base of both public and private resources to support programs providing human services with a focus on strategic investments.

aging in place

Goal I. Support the ability of older adults to 'age in place' and continue to live in the community.

discussion

As of 2010, 22% of Issaquah's residents are 65 or older. This number continues to rise as the nation's baby boomers age. Many of these residents would prefer to remain in their homes rather than move to an adult family home or senior facility where services are provided in house. There are a number of services provided by non-profit organizations to support older residents and those who lack mobility options, home repair and maintenance, and health care. Enabling aging in place provides a higher quality of life and independence for older residents, plus lessens the demands on nursing homes and related medical facilities.

HS Policy I1 Encourage and support programs and services, land uses, transportation options and affordable, accessible housing that enable "aging in place."

HS Policy I2 Facilitate continued intergration into the community through social interaction, neighborhood actities and civic events.

diverse population/ language barriers

Goal J. Provide services that help reduce barriers for diverse populations and non-english speaking populations in the community.

discussion

The diversity of residents in the region, and in particular on the Eastside, is increasing. According to the 2010 Census, 20% of residents in Issaquah are foreign born and 22% of households speak a language other than English as their first language at home. As mentioned in Goal B and C, English language training is a vital piece of assistance needed to support our diverse community and eliminate barriers to services, jobs and resources.

HS Policy J1 Support the provision of information, resources and services in culturally appropriate and linguistically competent ways which support services to diverse and non-english speaking populations in the community.

HS Policy J2 Identify gaps in the provision of and access to information, resources, amenities, and services to all populations, including diverse and non-english speaking populations, in the community.

utility assistance

Goal K. Ensure affordable utility services for low income households.

discussion

A number of emergency financial assistance programs provide resources for certain populations in the community. A number focus on rent assistance and eviction prevention, while others such as PSE HELP provide financial and weatherization assistance for eligible electricity and natural gas customers. The City provides utility discounts for low income senior citizens for water, sewer, stormwater and garbage collection services. Emergency financial assistance for basic needs (such as rent, food, mortgage or utilities assistance) has been identified in area needs assessments as a potential gap (Bellevue Human Services Needs Assessment Update, Food to Eat and Roof Overhead).

HS Policy K1 Support utility assistance programs for low income households, including financial assistance, weatherization and conservation programs in order to help reduce individual household utility costs and provide for increased housing stability.

provision of services – regional approach

Goal L. Support a regional approach to the provision of human services through collaboration of local and regional providers connected through public and private organization partnerships.

discussion

Human service needs do not follow jurisdictional boundaries and needs greatly outweigh resources available. Coordinated funding and delivery of services among both public and private organizations provides mutual benefits, may provide for economies of scale, improved quality of service, clearer customer information and better experience and overall results. In addition, different agencies and organizations have different abilities to access financial resources. Issaquah collaborates both on a regional (County and metropolitan planning area-wide) as well as sub-regional (e.g.: North-east Funder's Group) basis. Though funds are allocated locally, provision of service through well designed and applied regional approaches provide benefits to the community and can be both direct and indirect. Most of the goals regarding the provision of human services are best implemented through a coordinated regional approach, including future planning for facilities and services as growth is anticipated. This is why Public Transportation, Affordable Housing, and Shelters are all within this “provision of services – regional approach” group.

HS Policy L1 **Regional Provision of Services:** Collaborate with local and regional public and private organizations to develop a cooperative strategy for a regional approach to the provision of human services to facilitate collaborative planning, aid in the coordination of services, improve customer information, access diverse grant and financial resources, enhance overall quality of service, improve efficiency, avoid redundancy and achieve better overall results.

- HS Policy L2** **Siting of Facilities:** Work with King County and local service providers to achieve a geographic regional fair-share balance in siting special needs housing and other human service facilities throughout Issaquah and the region.
- HS Policy L3** Promote and encourage the siting and access of facilities for adult day health, affordable housing/special needs housing, alcohol and drug treatment, child care, community centers, emergency shelter, medical and dental care, long term care (such as AIDS hospice), senior centers, senior housing and social services. Encourage neighborhood cooperation in the siting of these facilities.
- HS Policy L4** **Use of Facilities** Form regional partnerships with school districts, colleges, and other jurisdictions to optimize the use of facilities and services.
- HS Policy L5** **Human services legislation:** Support legislation at the county, state, and federal levels that promotes the goals and policies of Issaquah's Human Services Element.

implementation

Goal M. Measure the effectiveness and success of the Comprehensive Plan in achieving community visions, goals and policies.

discussion

Achieving the visions of the Issaquah community for how our City should look, feel and function is dependent on implementation of the goals and policies adopted in this document. While there are not sufficient resources to accomplish all of the implementation strategies simultaneously, the City can make progress to carry out the Comprehensive Plan by identifying priorities and necessary resources. The City has established a list of Implementation Strategies (Appendix B) that are needed to accomplish the Community vision within the Comprehensive Plan, and although not complete, the list is intended to be used as a tool for prioritizing City resources, including budget and staff time. Additionally, the City cannot accomplish all the implementation strategies alone. As part of a much larger and growing metropolitan area, issues such as growth rates, housing supply and demand, and transportation systems require cooperation and partnerships with the public and private sectors as well as local, state and federal agencies.

- HS Policy M1** Ensure Comprehensive Plan goals and policies are accompanied by related and required implementing actions, including but not limited to those listed in the Implementation Strategy (Appendix B).